

SUNBURY-ON-THAMES

Urban District Council.

Annual Report

OF THE
Medical Officer of Health
FOR 1920.

WM. L. BYHAM,

Medical Officer of Health.

Sunbury-on-Thames Middx.

June, 1921.

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OF THE
MEDICAL OFFICER OF HEALTH
Sunbury Urban District Council.
1920.

GENTLEMEN—

I have the honour to submit my Annual Report for the year 1920.

Census, 1911, was 4607 and estimated for the year 1920—5137.

The district comprises the Urban District of Sunbury-on-Thames, and includes the villages of Upper Halliford and Charlton, covering an area of some two thousand six hundred and sixty acres, with a rateable value of approximately £37,000.

A very large proportion of this acreage is devoted to market gardening and grazing, and consists of shallow loam with a deep substratum of sharp gravel and sand; there is very little clay in the district.

A considerable number of the inhabitants have various occupations in the Metropolis, but occupation is found for many in the local industrial concerns, which comprise

Engineering Works, Emery Works, a large Millboard Factory and the Metropolitan Water Board, which has large interests in the locality.

There are no Factories which have any material bearing upon the general health of the district.

About 10 acres of ground are available for recreation, cricket, football, etc.

There is a public Bathing Place and the ordinary advantages of a riverside residential district for boating, regattas, etc.

VITAL STATISTICS.

The Vital Statistics for the year under consideration are in every way satisfactory, and compare favourably as they should do in a healthy district such as this is, with the returns for the whole of England and Wales.

BIRTHS—

There have been 149 births, including 12 illegitimate, of which 76 were males and 73 females.

This gives a birth rate of 29.2 per thousand of the population; this is a higher rate than for some years. Last year's rate was 19.8 and that for the whole of England and Wales for 1920 is 25.4.

DEATHS—

The total deaths for the year, including those of persons belonging to the district but who died in institutions outside it, were 58, viz. 29 males and 29 females.

A rate of 11.4 per thousand of the population is somewhat lower than that for England and Wales for the same period, which is 12.4.

There was nothing like epidemic diarrhœa amongst the young which so often occurs in very hot summers, and the exceptionally mild winter was beneficial to the

aged. In fact, with the exception of a considerable number of cases of influenza the district has been exceptionally free from any disease of an epidemic form.

It is stated that the Death Rate for the past year for England and Wales is the lowest recorded since 1862, and the Birth Rate and Infant Mortality both constitute records.

INFANT MORTALITY—

There have been twelve deaths of infants of under one year of age, but most of these were of a more or less unpreventable nature, such as debility at birth.

A rate of 87 per one thousand births is regrettably high, that for England and Wales being 80 for the same period. It would be difficult to account for this somewhat high rate, which I look upon as purely accidental, in the face of the good work and beneficial instruction given to Mothers as to the general management of their children at the Local Maternity Welfare Centre, which has a clinic once a week all the year round.

The amount of Poor Law relief is on the decline.

The high rate of wages generally and old age pensions would naturally tend to this direction.

There is one Local Cottage Hospital, which provides Medical and Surgical Relief, but a far larger number of persons obtain treatment and advice from the Royal Richmond Hospital, the various London hospitals and the Staines Union Infirmary.

Something like 96 per cent. of the houses in the more densely populated portion of the district are supplied with Public Water Service, the water being of an excellent quality and continual in supply.

The more rural parts of the district are dependent upon well water, which was very seriously menaced by the pumping operations carried on by the Metropolitan Water Board in connection with the construction of the Littleton Reservoirs. As soon as it was discovered that the water was falling to an ominous level representations were made to the Metropolitan Water Board and a four-inch main was laid from Upper Halliford to Charlton, which was the part of the district to suffer most, and the danger of a water famine was averted.

There have been no cases reported of water pollution.

The river Thames forms the southern boundary of the district, and other small streams and watercourses intersect it.

The sewerage of the district is carried out on the broad irrigation principle on a sewage farm at the western extremity of the district, away from any habitations.

No complaints have been received in connection with this scheme.

Occasionally purely local blockages of drains occur and are promptly dealt with as they arise.

All those houses with Public Water Supply, viz. 96 per cent. of those in the more urban part of the district, are supplied with water closets, while earth closets and cesspools serve the remainder.

It is seldom that any defects in either system are found, and it may be said generally that the district is well served in this respect.

House refuse is collected in the Urban District once a week from house to house and fortnightly in the Rural Area.

Frequent inspections of Dairies and Cowsheds have been made during the year and suggestions made and carried out from time to time. The quality of the milk is good and the pasture land excellent in the neighbourhood. There are six dairies on the Register.

The Bakeries are in a satisfactory state and well administered. There are no underground bakeries, common lodging houses or offensive trades in the district.

There is one licensed slaughter house.

No action has been taken in connection with diseased meat or unsound food.

INFECTIOUS DISEASES—

There have been comparatively few notifications of Infectious Diseases, the most satisfactory feature of the returns being that only two cases of Pulmonary Tuberculosis have been reported. The following is the list for the year;—

Diphtheria	...	...	...	11
Erysipelas	...	...	...	4
Scarlet Fever	...	...	...	4
Measles	...	...	...	2
Pulmonary Tuberculosis	...	...	...	2
Pneumonia	...	...	...	1
Total				24

There were no deaths from infectious diseases, and all cases of diphtheria and scarlet fever were promptly removed to the Isolation Hospital. All suspicious cases of sore throats are swabbed and examined bacteriologically and contacts treated with diphtheria antitoxin, which is supplied to medical practitioners on application, a supply being always kept in stock at the Council Offices.

Any contaminated or verminous bedding or clothing is destroyed and reparation made when considered necessary.

Any suspected cases of Tuberculosis are sent to and examined by the Tuberculosis Medical Officer at the nearest dispensary.

Arrangements are now complete for the reception and treatment of small-pox cases at South Minns Hospital.

VACCINATION—

Eighty-three primary Vaccinations have been performed by the Public Vaccinator during the year and four re-vaccinated. Re-vaccination does not receive the attention it should, and there is rather a large number of exemptions from primary vaccinations.

No cases of Ophthalmia neonatorum have been reported. One Midwife practises in the district.

All infectious cases suitable for Institutional Treatment are sent to the Joint Isolation Hospital at Stanwell.

Considerable progress has been made with the Housing Schème. These arrangements will meet in a satisfactory manner any necessity that existed for further housing accommodation and will tend to relieve difficulties in overcrowding which have occurred in the past. It will now be possible to deal more effectively with undesirable properties in the district.

As there is a likelihood of building developments of a residential and industrial nature in the near future it is now desirable that a Town Planning Act should be adopted to apply to the whole district, reserving the better sites for good-class residences, to the exclusion of industrial works and factories.

Bye Laws now adopted are :—

- (a) Model Bye Laws as to new Streets and Buildings.
- (b) Dairy, Cowshed and Milkshop Regulations.
- (c) House Drainage Regulations.
- (d) Cemetery Regulations.

In conclusion, I may say that I have met with no opposition in the carrying out of sanitary requirements and Public Health Administration ; but, on the contrary, have had every help from the Council and valuable assistance from the Surveyor and Sanitary Inspector.

I am, Gentlemen,

Your obedient Servant,

WM. L. BYHAM.

